1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

Part 2 PSYCHO-CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

128 THE purpose of this portion of the volume is to draw together the material on childhood and child training and to attempt to show how it can be synthesized with adult behavior and values as well as with institutional forms. Formalized and unformalized behaviors are discussed in the order in which the growing Atimelanger encounters them. It will be necessary to interweave the strands, many of which will have to be carried continuously throughout the material. However, certain age groupings and associated emphases are possible. For example, the period of infancy lends itself to a discussion of the influence of orifice psychology and the gratifications or frustrations of physiological needs and tensions. Early and late childhood are best associated with the discussion of discipline. Adolescence in this culture is the period when adjustments to adult values begin to loom large. Adulthood presents the possibility for working out early conditioning and cultural values in terms of institutions and status positions.

Chapter 3

Infancy: From Birth to Walking

● 954 THE physiological theories of conception and fetal life in Atimelang will be discussed later in a section on sexual behavior and attitudes. Parental attitudes and behavior immediately before, during, and subsequent to birth will be described here only in so far as they impinge on the development of the infant. Within the infancy period Atimelangers recognize a series of stages: from birth to the first smile, from the first smile to sitting up alone or crawling, from crawling to walking. The actual age in months or years is of no concern. In fact, it is very difficult for the average mother to count back through the number of gardens she has planted, in order to tell you whether her child was born even three or four years ago. Therefore, ages given throughout this volume are only rough estimates.

THE CONFINEMENT

843 Pregnancy and actual birth are not surrounded with many observ-
183 ances, and precautions vary with individuals both in kind and in the strictness with which they are followed. For instance, intercourse be-

1:Du Bois .E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OFS Alor OFS

of the children themselves are also of interest here. Certain points may §54
be made in connection with the sleeping habits and any disturbances §64
the child might be supposed to feel at being displaced by the father. First, the child's dependency on the mother is less marked than in our culture; second, the child is given genital satisfaction through deliberate masturbation. One of the favorite substitutes for offering the breast in an effort to pacify a child is to massage its genitals gently. [sic]
It was my impression that this device for pacifying children was used even more by siblings than by adults. If the observation is correct, the explanation may be found in two factors: First, the sibling acting as mother-surrogate cannot pacify the child by offering it food, and second, the young sibling may have fewer occasions to express sex interest than the adult.

No effort is made during infancy to teach the child to talk. Although §48
an adult may sing dance songs to soothe it, there is no deliberate attempt to impart verbal training. At most, the only talking I have seen an adult direct toward a child is the repetition of its name.

Toilet training, too, is completely disregarded during the prewalking §63
period. Adults exhibit no anger or disgust when a child soils the carrying shawl or the body of the person caring for it. The caretaker cleans up after the child with the most casual matter-of-factness, wiping off its buttocks with a bit of leaf, a corn husk, or a bamboo sliver.

Nor is walking urged on the child. Crawling is confined to the rela- §48
tively rare periods when the child is seated on the verandah or in the living room instead of being in a carrying shawl. Naturally, as the child gets older more of this freedom is allowed it, and one sometimes sees a prewalking baby crawling about either in a sitting position with one leg under it or raised up on all fours. I do not recall ever seeing a child crawl on hands and knees. When the child of its own volition begins to stand, it most commonly pulls itself upright holding onto the leg of some near-by adult. Padafan, a child whose development I was able to watch with some consistency, definitely learned to stand by pulling himself up on his mother's leg in an effort to get her attention so that she would pick him up and nurse him.

When a youngster begins trying to stand, any adult may play with it and assist it in its efforts at walking, but for both the adult and the child this is a play activity involving neither consistency nor rewards and punishments. Thus his first mastery technique does not depend exclusively upon the assistance of a parent. For about eight children whose §56
ages I could determine with some accuracy walking began not much later than it does with us, which is from the twelfth to the eighteenth

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OFS Alor OFS

854 mouth. This, incidentally, may indicate the uneasiness of the pressure many parents place on their children in our culture.

842 Weaning rarely, if ever, occurs before the child can walk and therefore is properly discussed in the following chapter.

CONCLUSIONS

837 Two cautions should be repeated to guard against overstandardization: First, too much of this material is unquantified; second, there is a great range of experiences. As far as possible the extent of this range has been indicated. It deserves emphasis because it would be highly erroneous to think that the culture of Atimelang unduly stereotypes individuals.

854 The Alorese infant has fairly high contact gratifications, it suffers no
84 suppression of infantile sexuality, and it is not disciplined into the early acquisition of physical and intellectual skills and controls. The chief source of frustration seems to be in feeding. However, this occurs in the period of life when ingestive gratification is probably of primary importance to the developing organism.

842 The Alorese mother has economic responsibilities that may make her
859 welcome the birth of a child less cheerfully and care for it with less solicitude than she might in another culture. And in addition, the culture underrates the satisfactions of nursing for the mother. These factors that motivate against the development of a solicitous and maternalistic attitude should be balanced against the fact that the culture does not emphasize the difficulties of childbirth as a physiological process. Nor does it foster an attitude of self-sacrifice and abnegation in connection with bearing children.

854 Interestingly enough, the advantages of childbirth are phrased in terms of self-interest and the prestige accruing from one's death feasts. The father is shoved off at birth but is given opportunity to express delight in the child during infancy. However, he lavishes care on it then only if he is not engrossed in financial and ceremonial occupations, and if he is not devoting part of his time to other households. In other words, the satisfactions and intimacies of fatherhood are cut into by a series of status and prestige demands. It is definitely the less busy—that is, the less important—father who has time to be a good mother substitute.

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

Chapter 4

Early Childhood: From Walking to Wearing a Loincloth

THIS period covers the time from the first walking to about the age of [356] ●
five or six, when children are referred to as "young" (*fila*). It may well be the period of greatest stress for the Atimelang child.

WALKING

When a child begins to walk about with some show of steadiness, it is no longer carried so constantly in a shawl, although the break is obviously not sharp and complete. Padafan, for example, began toddling at about sixteen months, and from then on, most of his day was spent out of the shawl. However, when he was taken any distance, he was still carried in the infantile fashion. At first, too, when his mother returned from the fields in the evening she would put him in her shawl to nurse him. By the time he was approximately twenty-six months old he was rarely placed in a carrying shawl any more, although he might still be picked up and held in an adult's arms when he strenuously insisted upon it.

The carrying shawl, however, remains throughout life a way of [482]
transporting sick or injured persons. The devotion of a parent who carries a sick half-grown child any distance, or of an adult who carries an aged and incapacitated parent in this fashion, is referred to with approval. Naturally, when a heavy person is carried, some adjustment to the load must be made. In such a case the person often sits pickaback, and the shawl is passed under his buttocks and across the chest or forehead of the carrier in tumpline fashion. In any case, the carrying shawl is associated with helplessness and infancy and is normally discarded [355]
between the second and third year of life. Therefore, after learning to walk, the child loses many of the constant skin contacts and much of the support it previously received.

FEEDING

At this time the child is turned out to play near the house or on the [355]
dance place for the whole day under the casual supervision of an older [84]
child or an aged adult. The most drastic repercussion of this additional freedom is an increase in the unsatisfactory aspects of feeding. When the mother goes off to work, the child is left from about eight in the

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OFS Alor OFS

vices with which adults protect themselves and their kin from the im- 849
ligmacy of such ghosts. The only person who claimed to have seen a 775
ghost while I was in the community was a boy of thirteen.

There are also cases of frightening that belong to the category of 858
teasing and that have nothing to do with discipline or education. A 522
case of this sort occurred one night. It is whispered that the Hollanders' 777
voices which travel over a single telephone wire strung along the coast 538
are relayed by dead children whose heads the patrolling soldiers collect for the purpose. This superstition is in itself a new bit of folk belief significant of the attitude toward children. One night when a group of girls and boys under ten were walking along the trail, a grown man who had hidden behind a tree jumped out at them, yelling a curse word often employed by soldiers. The children raced home screaming with fear. Later the man who had frightened them stopped at their house and made fun of them for their terror.

Negative controls range from corporal punishment through deprep- 781
tion, teasing, and ridicule to the inculcation of fears. Any one of these methods may be linked to another. From them the child learns not only stereotyped social attitudes but also much of the underlying pattern of human relationships.

"EE"

The masturbation that little boys pursue so casually and freely dur- 864
ing early childhood seems to disappear after the acquisition of a loin- 864
cloth. At least it is no longer to be observed, and adults say that "children forget about it." I have, however, noticed young boys who have not yet quite mastered the art of tying their loincloths tugging and pulling on them in a manner suggestive of mild masturbation. There is marked modesty on the part of adults about the careful adjustment of loincloths, and as soon as a child wears his first one he begins adopting the same attitude. When a child is careless he is laughed at and shamed by older children and adults. Within a year or two most children have learned to manage this garment. One of the acts of ag- 865
gression at this stage of life, and one that may crop up under extreme provocation in adult quarrels, is ripping off the loincloth of one's opponent. Such behavior brings strong condemnation and even physical punishment from adults (see Lomani's autobiography, page 444). Some youngsters have only cast-off pieces of cloth and seem to suffer the same feeling of inadequacy and shame that ragged children experience in our culture.

Sex play during this period is frowned upon by adults, but it un-

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OFS Alor OFS

childhood, is replaced in late childhood to a large extent, but not exclusively, by the words for genitals. On the other hand, it was interesting to note in the exchange of insults accompanying mock warfare between two gangs of boys the point at which adults began to feel that the children were overstepping the bounds of what might be allowed. The boys hurled the following remarks at each other without provoking comment: "Crooked neck," "Yaws buttocks," "Eat feces," "Follow your dead mother," "Soft bellies," "Swollen throats." But two insults that brought angry protest from adults were: "Sleep with your mother; your father can't," and "May you grow hair on your penis."

AGGRESSION

The decrease of obscenity in growing children is paralleled by the decrease in actual aggression. Boys are told to become more circumspect in their language and to avoid blows. The situation is nicely summed up in a comment on an adolescent fight in which blood had been shed. The narrator finished the story with these words, "We promised not to exchange blows any more and if we fought, to fight only with words." And in order to avoid fines, words too must become more guarded as one grows older and richer. Even in fairly young boys the adult male pattern of avoiding blows begins to take effect. On the whole, I had the impression that there were far fewer physical combats among the play groups of Atimelang than among comparable groups in our schoolyards. Once when a pair of boys about thirteen and fourteen began actually hitting at each other, my camera caught what my eye failed to catch—namely, the fashion in which all the younger boys drew away from the scene in apparent fright. This, of course, is in distinct contrast to the way children in our society tend to crowd around in a circle when a fight begins.

The number of anecdotes in the autobiographies that deal with violence do not substantiate my impressionistic observations on this point. It is quite possible that adults dwell unduly in fantasy on a period that allowed freer expression of hostility.

It is interesting in this respect that the forfeit for losing games is to receive a specified number of slaps. However, despite this permissible outlet for aggression, I was struck by the casualness with which the slaps were given. Very rarely did I see either boys or girls, after winning a game of marbles or jacks for example, take vigorous advantage of this opportunity. In contrast to this should be noted the verbal aggression in a game of "hide-the-thimble." A piece of bladу grass is hidden on the dance place by one player. The finder pounds the grass on a stone,

I:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

[158 711] people must abstain from seafoods, and she conversed with ghosts who knew all that had happened. She was assured and autocratic in all she did. She even scolded one of the most influential men of the community, who chanced to be a distant kinsman, for delaying the first feast in connection with the erection of his lineage house. Her tone toward other children was as peremptory as that of adults toward children.

Many details of this anecdote are omitted here since they belong more properly to a discussion of religion, which must await later publication. The episode serves here as a rare, but not unique, instance of singular status achieved by a small child. It demonstrates that even children, to whom the society accords no very high position, may develop devices for wielding power.

CONCLUSIONS

[154 161] This period of late childhood, when children are referred to as *mokun*, is characterized by the disappearance of temper tantrums and the child's acquisition of devices for taking care of itself in its environment. It is also the time when the discipline foreshadowed in early childhood assumes its harshest forms. The restrictive aspects of this discipline range from teasing and ridicule involving shame to actual physical violence or threats of violence. For boys there is very little constructive training for their adult roles, except as their somewhat privileged position in comparison with girls permits them greater opportunity and furnishes them greater incentives for absorptive disciplines.

[154 168] Because boys must search for their food they learn incidentally a great deal about the society in which they live. Girls, on the other hand, are deliberately trained in the food quest and the role they must play as providers.

Girls have a less privileged position but more consistent training and constructive participation in the activities of women. That they may resent their status as women is perhaps indicated by the fact that some of the growing girls assume male roles in play. Both sexes have the [156] same experience with inconsistency in adult behavior toward them. Both learn to assert themselves by running off, by seeking the protection of other kin, and by vigorous and often violent resistance. In certain realms at least, both sexes must acquire a feeling of their undervalued position, although they can depend on the assistance of adult kin in litigations and in sacrifices to placate the dead or malignant spirits.

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

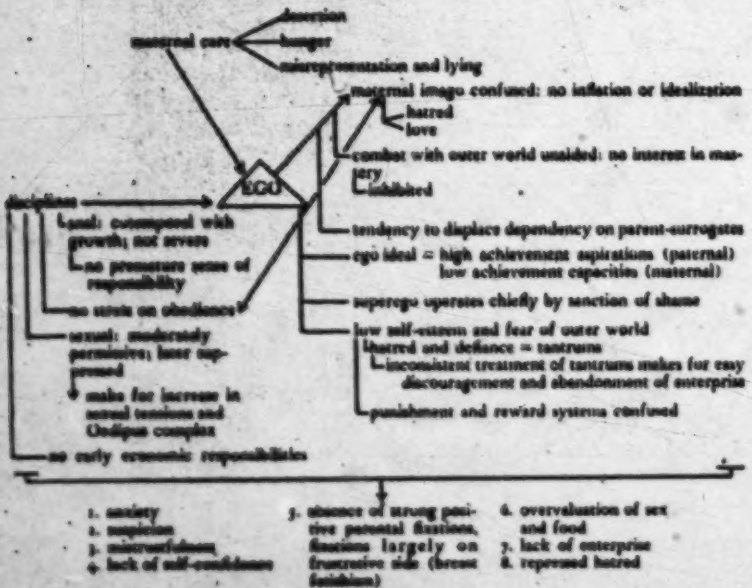
These factors cannot but create distrust toward others and lability 856 ●
in human relationships. Children must be left with a sense of bewilderment in placing their loyalties and with an essential ignorance of warm and trustful relationships. The lack of training and praise, as well as the presence of teasing, ridicule, and fear, combined with lack of privileges and esteems, must create in the child an essential distrust of itself. All these factors will influence ego formations. They will probably affect morality clusters by failing to provide consistent behavioral precepts. They deprive the child of definite loved persons by means of whom 577
social standards can be internalized.

I do not wish to imply that the Alorese are without such standards—social life without them could not exist. But there is good reason to believe that in Alor the standards are not so rigid or so deeply rooted as they are in our middle class. The likelihood of a deep sense of [154]
guilt, therefore, and of turning aggressions inward upon the self to the point of suicide is much less pronounced. Suicide as a culturally recog- [762]
nized device is unknown, and I have records of only a very few situations that might be interpreted by implication as suicidal. (See Chapter 7.)

In respect to sex the culture is much less harsh. Sexual activity is 856
expected to diminish during late childhood. However, information regarding it is not withheld, and disapproved activity seems to be no more harshly treated than social offenses such as theft and disobedience. [158]
Again, as in earlier developmental periods, the activities of the instincts seem to be less destructively handled than those of the ego.

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

Chart I. Integrative Units of Early Childhood


desertion
maternal care
hunger
misrepresentation and lying
maternal image confused: no inflation or idealization
hatred
love
combat with outer world unaided: no interest in mastery
inhibited
EGO
discipline
anal: contemporal with growth; not severe
no premature sense of responsibility
no stress on obedience
sexual: moderately permissive; later suppressed
make for increase in sexual tensions and Oedipus complex
no early economic responsibilities
tendency to displace dependency on parent-surrogates
ego ideal = high achievement aspirations (paternal) low achievement capacities (maternal)
superego operates chiefly by sanction of shame
low self-esteem and fear of outer world
hatred and defiance = tantrums
inconsistent treatment of tantrums makes for easy discouragement and abandonment of enterprise
punishment and reward systems confused
1. anxiety
2. suspicion
3. mistrustfulness
4. lack of self-confidence
5. absence of strong positive parental fixations, fixations largely on frustrative side (breast fetishism)
6. overvaluation of sex and food
7. lack of enterprise
8. repressed hatred

personality is not yet stabilized. We shall now list briefly those factors which seem to us most important for the picture of late childhood given in Chart II.

Late childhood is characterized chiefly by the channelization of aggression. Foraging and stealing is really constructive ego development in the boy. It would be an error to regard this purely as an effort to make good the deficiencies in parental care that persist throughout this period. It is also partly an expression of vengeance against the parent and a bit of self-assertion in that it implies, "I really don't need you any more." A general guilt feeling about the deprivation of youngsters exists in the form of a universal fear of being robbed without any strenuous efforts to stop their depredations.

A second feature in late childhood is the fact that children of both sexes are prematurely inducted into the maternal role. The influence of this factor on the care of infants and on the development of sibling relationships has been discussed previously.

A third point is that although no formal training exists for the boy, there is a continuance of coercive measures, a continuance of the practice of fooling, misleading, and lying which only generates more and